

REMARKS

Applicant's counsel thanks the Examiner for the careful consideration given the application.

Applicant's counsel is enclosing herewith a Revocation of Power of Attorney form along with a Statement Under 37 CFR 3.73(b) form; please enter each of these documents in the record of this application and please change the correspondence address to Customer No. 000116.

The specification is being amended and the claims are being amended. No new matter has been added. The claims have been rejected under Section 102 as anticipated by Freeman et al. (EP0281064). However, when this reference is looked at more carefully, it can be seen that the vacuum drum disclosed in Freeman is not provided with any additional opening **positioned posteriorly** to the lateral surface and **in constant communication with the external environment**. In Freeman, the inlet ports 34, 36, 38 are positioned **on top** (and **not posteriorly** to the lateral surface) and they are supplied with pressure air, **said inlet ports being not in direct communication with the external environment** (see column 5, lines 50-58). In other words, the vacuum drum disclosed in Freeman seems to be duly functioning only if the ports are connected to a pressure supply.

The substance of claim 5 has been added to claim 1, and claim 5 has been cancelled. The technical feature shown in claim 5 of the application as filed, namely the presence of an additional opening positioned posteriorly to the lateral surface, is not disclosed in Freeman. Furthermore, there are no hints to modify or adapt the cited prior art in order to obtain a vacuum drum according to present claim 1 (wherein the features of claim 5 have been added to claim 1).

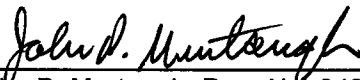
Applicant notes that the amendments now being made in the USPTO have been already accepted before the European Patent Office and thus the corresponding European patent application has been granted (No. EP 1646564).

Since the features of claim 5 are not shown in the prior art, and since the features of claim 5 are now in claim 1, it is clear that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. All the other claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are accordingly allowable by reason of their dependency. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance with respect to all the claims is now in order and is respectfully requested.

If any additional fees are required by this communication, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, Order No. BUG7-43420.

Respectfully submitted,

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